

Message Text

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TRSE-00 SAM-01 /092 W

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R 190630Z APR 75

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4635

INFO USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 HONG KONG 4225

NOFORN

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PFOR, CH, VN, VS

SUBJECT: NORTH VIETNAMESE REMARKS ABOUT SIHANOUK AND THE PRC

REF: HK -811

SUMMARY. ADRV OFFICIAL IN HONG KONG, TALKING TO A THIRD
WORLD SOURCE, ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS IN CAMBODIAN AND VIETNAM,
SHOWED IMPLICIT ANTI-CHINESE FEELINGS AND CRITICIZED
SIHANOUK FOR BEING OVERLY COMMITTED TO THE PRC. END SUMMARY.

1. HONG KONG BASED INDIAN EXPRESS CORRESPONDENT, B.K.
TIWARI, HAS INFORMED U.S. CONGENOFF OF SUBSTANCE OF RE-
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MARKS MADE DURING AN APRIL 14 CONVERSATION TIWARI HAD

WITH PHAM HONG QUANG, CHIEF OF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE TRADE MISSION IN HONG KONG. AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED REFTEL, TIWARI IS ON VERY GOOD TERMS WITH QUANG WHO MADE HIS REMARKS DURING A LENGTHY SMALL PRIVATE FAREWELL FOR TIWARI HOSTED BY QUANG AND ATTENDED ONLY BY TIWARI AND QUANG'S VIETNAMESE COLLEAGUES.

2. TIWARI SAID QUANG, WHILE CONTINUING TO CAREFULLY AVOID ANY IMPLICATION THAT NORTH VIETNAMESE FORCES WERE OPERATING IN SOUTH VIETNAM, SHOWED OBVIOUS PLEASURE WITH THE MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM OF THE PAST MONTH. QUANG IMPLIED THAT HANOI IN FACT WAS SURPRISED AT THE UNEXPECTED SPEED AND EXTENT OF COMMUNIST MILITARY ADVANCES, SAYING THAT IT WAS NOT VERY LONG AGO THAT SOUTH VIETNAMESE PRG REPS HAD BEEN "ADVISED" BY DRV DEFENSE MINISTER GIAP THAT PRG FORCES SHOULD PREPARE FOR A FURTHER TWO TO THREE YEAR STRUGGLE EFFORT.

3. TIWARI SAID QUANG WAS LESS DIRECT AND VOCAL ABOUT CRITICISM OF THE CHINESE THAN DURING EARLIER JANUARY CONVERSATION (REFTEL). NEVERTHELESS AN UNDERTONE OF ANTI-CHINESE FEELINGS WAS IMPLICIT DURING THE CONVERSATION AND SHOWED THROUGH CLEARLY SEVERAL TIMES. FOR EXAMPLE WHEN TIWARI, REFERRING TO PRESS SPECULATION, ASKED WHETHER A HIGH-LEVEL PRC MILITARY MISSION WHICH WAS IN THE DRV IN EARLY MARCH MIGHT HAVE HAD A HAND IN DIRECTING THE COMMUNIST MILITARY OFFENSIVE IN SOUTH VIETNAM, QUANG SHOWED VISIBLE IRRITATION AND ANSWERED SHARPLY TO THE EFFECT "DON'T BE STUPID, DO YOU THINK WE WOULD HAVE ANY KIND OF SITUATION LIKE THAT?"

4. QUANG CHARACTERIZED US VARIOUSLY AS "STUPID", "NAIVE" AND "FOOLISH" FOR SUPPORTING CORRUPT LEADERS IN SVN AND CAMBODIA AND FOR US NEGOTIATION EFFORTS RE CAMBODIA. HE SAID IN LATTER REGARD THAT US TIMING WAS WAY OFF AND DID NOT MESH WITH POLITICAL REALITIES. WASHINGTON HAD SUPPORTED LON NOL AND THEN FINALLY HAD TRIED THROUGH THE CHINESE TO NEGOTIATE WITH SIHANOUK. HOWEVER BY THIS TIME REAL POWER IN CAMBODIA DID NOT RESIDE WITH SIHANOUK BUT WITH KHIEU SAMPHAN'S GROUP. SAYING THAT THE CHINESE HAD THOROUGHLY

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INGRATIATED THEMSELVES WITH SIHANOUK, QUANG SAID "WE KNOW ALL ABOUT THAT RELATIONSHIP" BUT HE WOULD NOT BE DRAWN OUT ON HANOI'S RELATIONSHIP WITH KHIEU SAMPHAN.

5. IN FURTHER DISCUSSION ON SIHANOUK, QUANG CAME CLOSE TO SAYING THAT SIHANOUK WAS DIRECTLY UNDER CHINESE INFLUENCE. HE BEGAN BY STATING THAT THE PRINCE DESERVED CREDIT FOR HAVING COME FORWARD IN 1970 AND SERVING AS THE SOLE RALLYING POINT

FOR VARIOUS PATRIOTIC FORCES. HOWEVER, SIHANOUK'S HUMANISTIC STREAK OF FEELING DEEPLY OBLIGATED AND COMMITTED FOR PAST KINDNESSES, ALTHOUGH UNDERSTANDABLE, WAS NOT POLITICALLY PRACTICAL. SUCH TRAIT COULD ALTER THE INDEPENDENCE AND JUDGMENT OF A LEADER. QUANG THEN RECALLED HOW INDIA HAD SINCERELY BEEN THE GREATEST FRIEND AND SUPPORTER OF CHINA ONLY TO HAVE THE CHINESE THEMSELVES LATER REVERSE THAT RELATIONSHIP COMPLETELY. THIS WAS A LESSON TO BE KEPT IN MIND. IN TERMS OF SIHANOUK'S FUTURE ROLE, QUANG REMARKED THAT SIHANOUK HAD GREAT PERSONAL POPULARITY AMONG THE CAMBODIAN PEASANTRY. GIVEN HIS TENDENCY TO BE OVERLY ATTACHED TO THE CHINESE, THERE WAS A RISK FOR CAMBODIA IF SIHANOUK WAS TOO ACTIVE THERE BECAUSE HE MIGHT TURN THE PEOPLE TO HIS WAY OF THINKING. THIS NEEDED TO BE CONSIDERED.

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6. ON THE FUTURE OF INDO-CHINA, QUANG REFERRED TO PRINCIPLES ENUNCIATED AT THE 1970-71 CONFERENCE OF INDO-CHINESE PEOPLES AND SAID THAT THOSE RESOLUTIONS STILL STAND. A CONFEDERATION OF INDO-CHINA STATES WOULD BE INDEPENDENT AND WOULD OPPOSE ALL GREAT POWER BULLYING AND INTERFERENCE. THEY WOULD HAVE COMMON SOCIALIST STATE OBJECTIVES AND EFFORTS WOULD BE DEVOTED TO DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL THEIR PEOPLE. TIWARI SAID ALTHOUGH QUANG DID NOT SAY SPECIFICALLY THAT HANOI WOULD HAVE SENIORITY IN THIS ARRANGEMENT, QUANG PUT SOME STRESS ON SAYING NORTH VIETNAM WAS PREPARED TO MAKE ITS CONTRIBUTION IN THE ARRANGEMENT AND THAT IT HAD LONGER EXPERIENCE AND HAD MADE MANY SACRIFICES.

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7. QUANG SAID SUCH A CONFEDERATION WOULD OFFER NO THREAT TO OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE AREA, SUCH AS THAILAND, MALAYSIA, ETC. THE INDO-CHINA STATES WANTED TO DEVELOP THEIR OWN RESOURCES AND ECONOMY AND WANTED NO EXPANSION. IN FACT THIS FORMATION WOULD BE OF BENEFIT TO THE ENTIRE REGION. WHEN TIWARI SAID THAT HE ASSUMED QUANG MEANT THE CONFEDERATION WOULD ACT AS A COUNTER TO CHINESE EXPANSIONISM, QUANG SMILED IN AGREEMENT.

8. TIWARI SAID QUANG AGAIN PRAISED SOVIET ASSISTANCE AND SUPPLIES TO THE DRV, MENTIONING THAT AS INDIA WAS ALSO RECEIVING SOVIET AID, TIWARI COULD APPRECIATE HOW MUCH MOSCOW'S ASSISTANCE HAS MEANT TO THE INDO-CHINA CAUSE. QUANG ALSO REMARKED THAT SOME OF THE MODERN MILITARY EQUIPMENT PROVIDED BY THE SOVIETS HAD NOT BEEN USED AS YET. TIWARI NOTED THAT IN CONTRAST TO THE PRAISE ABOUT SOVIET ASSISTANCE, QUANG SAID NOT A WORD ABOUT CHINESE ASSISTANCE.

9. COMMENT: QUANG'S CRITICAL REMARKS ABOUT SIHANOUK SUPPLEMENT OTHER PREVIOUS INFORMATION INDICATING THAT HANOI DOES NOT FAVOR MUCH OF A FUTURE ROLE FOR SIHANOUK IN CAMBODIA. SIHANOUK'S OWN RECENT STATEMENT TO THE PRESS (FOR EXAMPLE SEE HK-4137) ABOUT HIS LIMITED PRESENCE AND ROLE IN CAMBODIA SUGGESTS THAT HE HIMSELF WELL UNDERSTANDS THERE IS OPPOSITION. THE CHINESE, HOWEVER, JUDGING BY THEIR CURRENT TOUTING OF HIM SEEM TO HAVE THEIR OWN HIGHER HOPES (HK 4217.)

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 APR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975HONGK04225
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X2
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750138-0717
From: HONG KONG
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750434/aaaabfsx.tel
Line Count: 221
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 HK -811
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <12 JUN 2003 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <30 OCT 2003 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NORTH VIETNAMESE REMARKS ABOUT SIHANOUK AND THE PRC
TAGS: PFOR, CH, VN, VS, (SIHANOUK, NORODOM), (TIWARI, B K)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006